

Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices among Food Handlers on Food Safety during Orthodox Black Tea Manufacturing in Uva Medium Region of Sri Lanka

K.P.M. Kahandage^{1,2*}, I. Wickramasinghe¹, S.B. Navarathne¹ and W.A.J.P. Wijesinghe²

¹*Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Sri Jayawardenapura,
Nugegoda 10250, Sri Lanka*

²*Department of Export Agriculture, Uva Wellassa University,
Badulla 90000, Sri Lanka
avprathi8@gmail.com

Sri Lanka is a leading country for the production and export of the world's finest quality orthodox black teas. This exclusively branded Ceylon Tea represents the symbol of quality of black teas in the global market. In the meantime, unsafe food contaminated with harmful substances has driven a growing public health concern across the world. Therefore, as stakeholders, food handlers must play a vital role in assuring the safety and quality of foods throughout the value chain including tea. However, some limited and considerably low number of available studies have exhibited that food handlers are poor in handling food and acclimatizing to food safety practices. Therefore, this study was conducted to assess knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) of food safety among 90 food handlers in orthodox black tea manufacturing factories in the Uva Medium region (elevation between 600–1200 m *m.s.l.*) of Sri Lanka, using a questionnaire-based survey with simple random sampling technique. The findings of this study exhibited that food handlers possess a good total mean score values and mean of scores value for knowledge (16.05±2.76, 0.94), practices (86.66±9.78, 4.56) and attitudes (68.25±9.95, 4.26) concerning food safety practices such as wearing hair caps, masks, hand washing etc. However, a significant positive correlation existed only between the attitude and the practices of food safety among food handlers (0.338, $p < 0.05$). The knowledge and practices on food safety did not show any significant correlation. Therefore, the study revealed that food safety practices of food handlers at Orthodox black tea manufacturing factories in the Uva Medium region has a linear positive relationship with their attitudes, but not with their knowledge. Hence, this study suggests improving attitudes of food handlers through education and training for enhancing food safety culture.

Keywords: Orthodox black teas, Food safety, Attitude, Knowledge, Practice

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